



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE: GUIDE TO MAKING A COMPLAINT ABOUT WEETANGERA SCHOOL OR THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING DIRECTORATE

These procedures must be read in conjunction with the *ACT EDU Complaints Policy*.

1. Overview

- 1.1. These procedures will assist parents and community members who wish to make a complaint about Weetangera School or the Education and Training Directorate.

2. Rationale

This policy is about the prompt, fair and impartial resolution of complaints about ACT public schools and the Education and Training Directorate.

This policy recognises that many issues are best resolved informally at the local level.

3. Procedures

- 3.1. Do you have a concern or complaint about Weetangera School or the Education and Training Directorate?
 - Many concerns are resolved quickly and easily by first discussing the matter with the local level, that is the relevant teacher, school executive team member, school principal or the relevant area in the Directorate.
 - Raise your concern with the relevant teacher, a member of the school's executive team. If you continue to be concerned you should make an appointment to speak with Weetangera School's Principal.
 - Contact details for Weetangera School is 6142 2600 or info@weetangeraps.act.edu.au.
 - If you require assistance, please contact the Directorate's Liaison Unit by telephone: +61 2 6205 5429 or through the Directorate's online form which is available at www.det.act.gov.au/contact_us. The Liaison Unit may liaise with the principal of the school to help resolve the concern.
- 3.2. If you are not satisfied with the local level response, you may lodge a written complaint.
 - You will receive an acknowledgment of your written complaint within five business days and a written response, or interim response within 25 business days.
 - The principal will be advised of the details of the complaint.
 - Written complaints should be made via the Directorate's online form which is available at www.det.act.gov.au/contact_us or by mail: Manager, Liaison Unit GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601 Australia. The complaints form is Attachment A to these procedures.
- 3.3. If you would like the decision relating to your written complaint reviewed write to the Director, Governance and Assurance: email: DET.Legal.Liaison@act.gov.au or mail: GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601.
- 3.4. At any time you may approach any of the following external agencies for complaints relating to:
 - Imminent danger of a child – contact: [ACT Police](#)
 - Services for children and young people – contact: [ACT Human Rights Commission](#)
 - Operation and administration of an ACT Government Directorate – contact: [ACT Ombudsman](#)

Breaches of privacy – contact: [Office of the Australian Information Commissioner](#)
Child protection –contact: [Community Services Directorate](#)

4. Complaints

Complaints about the policy should be raised with Weetangera School.

Complaints about the operation of a school or the Directorate should initially be raised with the local level.

5. Contact

Weetangera School is responsible for this procedure.

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6. Definitions

Complainant: A complainant is person making a complaint.

Complaint: A complaint is a dispute, grievance or expression of dissatisfaction about the administration, management or operation of a school or the Directorate where a response or resolution is expected.

Local level: The local level refers to the school or Directorate area about which the complaint is made.

Reasonable assistance: Reasonable assistance includes access to large print documents and translation services.

7. Legislation

The Education Act 2004 provides for the operation and governance of ACT public schools.

The Human Rights Act 2004 aims to ensure that human rights are taken into account when developing and interpreting Territory legislation.

The Human Rights Commission Act 2005 establishes the ACT Human Rights Commission to provide an independent, fair and accessible process for the resolution of complaints between users and services for children and young people.

The Public Sector Management Act 1994 sets out ethical requirements for Government agencies and public employees (including teachers) in carrying out their work.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012 provides for people to report wrongdoing in the ACT public sector.

The Freedom of Information Act 1989 provides a right for individuals to seek access to Territory records including records about themselves and sets out a number of exemption provisions.

The Information Privacy Act 2014 promotes the protection of individual privacy by regulating the handling and management of personal information by ACT public sector agencies.

Implementation Documents:

Complaints Procedure: Guide to making a complaint about an ACT public school and the Education and Training Directorate.

Written Complaints Form (Attachment A).

Complaints Poster (Attachment B) for display in school reception areas.



Written Complaint Form

When you have raised complaint about the ACT Education and Training Directorate or an ACT public school with the local level (e.g. the principal of your child's school) but you are not satisfied with the response you received or the outcome of your complaint you may use this form to lodge your complaint with the Education and Training Directorate.

If you provide your contact details, the ACT Education and Training Directorate's Liaison Unit may need to contact you about your complaint. Please include your preferred daytime phone number. If you do not provide contact details we may not be able to fully investigate your complaint or provide you with a response.

You may also lodge your written complaint using the Directorate's online form: www.det.act.gov.au/contact_us. The online form allows you to attach word documents and other supporting documentation. It also provides you with the capacity to track the progress of your complaint. If you choose to use the online form, please provide information similar to that requested in this form. Complaints lodged using the online form can also be lodged anonymously.

Part A – Your details

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

With respect to the collection, use and disclosure of personal information, Education and Training Directorate is bound by the Information Privacy Act 2014. More information about this is available at: www.det.act.gov.au/functions/privacy

Part B – Your complaint

When did the alleged event/s happen?

What happened?

Are you attaching additional pages related to part B? [Yes/No] _____

Part C – The actions you have already taken to resolve this matter

Have you raised this matter with the local level (e.g. the principal of your child’s school)? [Yes/No] _____

If yes - With whom did you raise your complaint?

When did you raise your complaint?

What was the outcome?

Part D – Resolving your complaint

How do you think your complaint could be resolved?

Part E – Your supporting documentation

Are you providing supporting documents with this complaint form? [Yes/No] _____

Part F – Your signature

_____ date _____

Lodging your written complaint

Please send your complaint and any supporting documentation you are providing to:

Manager, Liaison Unit

ACT Education and Training Directorate

GPO Box 158

Canberra ACT 2601

Australia

Guide to handling complaints about ACT public schools and the Education and Training Directorate.**1. Overview**

1.1. The Education and Training Directorate (the Directorate) is committed to addressing the complaints it receives from parents, carers, students and members of the community about ACT public schools and the Directorate in a manner that is courteous, efficient, fair and prompt. The Directorate is also committed to establishing and nurturing positive partnerships between schools and their communities.

1.2. This procedural guide is designed to assist ACT public school and Directorate staff to manage complaints at the local level and respond to complainants who pursue further avenues of complaint resolution.

1.3. The following steps constitute the Directorate's complaints handling processes:

i. In the first instance, complainants should take a concern or complaint to the school or the area of the Directorate responsible for the matter. This is referred to as the 'local level'. As appropriate, the Liaison Unit will assist the complainant to contact the 'local level' directly, unless there are special circumstances which prevent this.

ii. Having followed the local level's complaint's handling processes - a complainant may lodge a Written Complaint with the Directorate through the Liaison Unit.

iii. Having lodged a Written Complaint with the Directorate, and received a written response - a complainant may request a review of the decision relating to the complaint by writing to the Director, Information, Communications and Governance.

iv. A complainant may also request a review of the processes relating to their complaint through the relevant external agency such as the Human Rights Commission, ACT Ombudsman or Australian Information Commissioner.

1.4. All ACT public schools and areas within the Directorate are responsible for managing complaints referred to them as the 'local level'.

1.5.1 Local levels are responsible for:

- developing processes to receive and address concerns and complaints
- communicating these processes to staff and stakeholders
- providing information about the written complaint process to complainants who are not satisfied with the local level's response
- referring concerns or appeals about student non-attendance, out of area enrolment, suspensions or exclusions to the Office for Schools
- displaying the Complaints Poster in all relevant reception areas.

1.5.2 The Liaison Unit is responsible for:

- assisting complainants to identify the local level where the complaint should initially be raised

- providing complainants with information about the Directorate’s Complaints Policy Education and Training and procedures, access to the Complaints Form and assistance relating to complaints
- liaising with school principals and complainants to achieve a resolution of matters of concern and re-engage the complainant with the school
- notifying the appropriate Director or School Network Leader of all complaints raised with the Liaison Unit
- referring concerns about a principal to the Office for Schools
- recording and categorising all requests for assistance made to the Liaison Unit
- managing the Written Complaint process
- recording and categorising all Written Complaints lodged with the Liaison Unit
- developing and distributing the Complaints Poster to principals and managers
- communicating the complaints procedures to principals, directors and managers.

1.5.3 The Legal Liaison section is responsible for:

- managing requests for review of decisions relating to Written Complaints
- coordinating responses to complaints made under a range of administrative law provisions.

1.5.4 The Office for Schools is responsible for:

- providing parents with assistance with appeals relating to out of area placements/enrolments, suspensions and exclusions
- handling complaints relating to Principals.

1.5.5 The Human Resources Branch is responsible for handling complaints relating to staff or employment.

2 School Specific Procedures

2.1 Weetangera School has developed a process by which concerns, and complaints are addressed.

2.2 Weetangera School complaints process is communicated to staff and parents by:

- discussing them in regular staff meetings
- publishing them on the school’s website and each term in the school newsletter
- displaying the Complaints Poster: Do you have a concern or complaint about your school?

(Attachment B) in all reception areas.

2.3 The Weetangera School complaints process is as follows:

- Many concerns are resolved quickly and easily by first discussing the matter with the class teacher.
- Complaints which have an unsatisfactory outcome can be referred the executive team member for the specific year level or the Deputy Principal.

- If the party continue to be concerned an appointment to speak with Weetangera School's Principal should be made.
- Contact details for Weetangera School is 6142 2600 or info@weetangeraps.act.edu.au.

2.4 Where a complainant is not satisfied with the local level's response, the principal should refer the complainant to the Directorate's Complaints Form (Attachment A)

3 Procedures for managing written complaints

3.1 If a complainant is not satisfied with a response to the complaint, the complainant may lodge a Written Complaint with the Manager, Liaison Unit at: ETD.Complaints@act.gov.au or GPO Box 158 CANBERRA ACT 2601 by using the Complaints Form (Attachment A) or by letter or email. The Complaints Form is also available on the Directorate's website at www.det.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/policy_a-z.

3.2 The Liaison Unit will:

- acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 business days of receipt by the Liaison Unit
- provide the complainant with the reference number for the Written Complaint and the area of the Directorate that the complaint has been referred for further action
- provide the complainant with a copy of Complaints Policy – Education and Training Directorate and complainant guide Attachment B which details the relevant time frames
- develop an investigation plan
- when necessary schedule a meeting with the Director, Information, Communications and Governance and the Office for Schools and/or relevant Director where the complaint is referred for action and response
- register the Written Complaint and record all actions and the outcome
- coordinate the written response to the complainant signed by the appropriated Director within 25 business days of complaint being lodged with Liaison Unit
- on case by case basis an interim response will be provided to the complainant with the final written response provided within a further 25 business days.